Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05 SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 SP-02 SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11 XMB-02 SIL-01 /130 W

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R 231746Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 806

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL TURIN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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BRUSSELS ALSO USEEC; GENEVA ALSO MTN; PARIS ALSO OECD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EEC, EIND, ETRD, EGEN, IT

SUBJECT: EC AUTO INDUSTRY FACES PROBLEMS

REF: BRUSSELS 03430

AS FOOTNOTE TO REFTEL, EMBASSY REPORTS THAT DURING RECENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONVERSATION AT LUNCH HOSTED BY THE AMBASSADOR FOR TREASURY UNDERSECRETARY SOLOMON, FIAT PRESIDENT GIANNI AGNELLI EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT VIABILITY OF EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY. WHILE NOTING THAT CERTAIN EUROPEAN INDUSTRIES EITHER FACED OR WOULD SOON FACE SERIOUS PROBLEMS, HE ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS STRONG POSSIBILITY OF CRISIS IN EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE

INDUSTRY WITHIN NEXT FIVE YEARS. PROBLEM, AS HE SAW
IT, WAS LEVELLING OFF OF DEMAND COUPLED WITH STRONG
AMERICAN PRESENCE IN EUROPEAN MARKET, JAPANESE COMPETITION, AND LARGE NUMBER OF EUROPEAN MANUFACTURERS.
WHEN ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR SOME
MERGERS TO TAKE PLACE AMONG EUROPEAN FIRMS, AGNELLI
SAID THAT WAS SO IN PRINCIPLE; HOWEVER, IN FACT EACH
COUNTRY WANTED ITS INDUSTRY TO EXPAND INTO ANOTHER
COUNTRY AND DID NOT WANT ITS OWN INDUSTRY TO BE ABSORBED.
GARDNER

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